re: Darlim Camp
Pam: Dr. Luis Gonçalves Pereira
CDPM - Nisora

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Foreign &
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London SW1 2AH

From The Minister of State

29 November 1990

Dear Eric,

Thank you for your letter of 10 November about the recent visit of our representative to East Timor.

Our Ambassador in Jakarta has reported that 10 diplomats (all Counsellors) visited East Timor from 15-19 October. In addition to the UK, France, Germany, Holland, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore and South Korea were represented. The visit was at their own initiative and not in response to an Indonesian invitation, although the Department for Foreign Affairs were informed in the normal way. The 10 diplomats travelled to Dili, Baucau and Los Palos without hindrance and spoke to the ICRC, and foreign and East Timorese priests, in private.

You also asked for a fuller briefing on recent disturbances in East Timor. I can confirm that there were two recent incidents in Dili involving school students. On 8 October the local (Javanese) public prosecutor addressed a senior school telling the students that under the Portuguese, the East Timorese had had no proper clothing, food or education, whereas all this had been provided by the Indonesians post incorporation. The students reacted strongly to this and to the prosecutor not being willing to discuss the matter further. The police were called and a stand-off ensued with the students occupying the building and breaking windows, etc. On the third day, the governor intervened, siding with the students and saying that he would speak to the prosecutor. During the demonstration, or as a result of it, two policemen were hurt but not seriously.

The Lord Avebury
House of Lords
LONDON
SW1A OPW

/On 15 October

On 15 October there was an incident at another school in Dili which was apparently sparked off by the circulation of a piece of paper, whose origins are unknown, calling for independence. At some point the police were called and a student was beaten. In apparent revenge, a police motorcyclist nearby was attacked by some youths/students and badly hurt, his motorcycle was set on fire and his pistol stolen.

The authorities reacted quickly with nightly raids on the homes of students and others in an attempt to recover the pistol. We have received reports of houses broken into, beatings and of people being taken away and an unconfirmed report that 5 people were killed at one spot.

The students in East Timor have become bolder over the past year in expressing their discontent over Indonesian rule and at their poor employment prospects. Against this background, incidents such as those I have described above can be sparked off by relatively minor events. Apparently some fifty people were detained, but most have now been released. The fact that the demonstrations took place at all reflects the more open atmosphere prevailing. It is too early to know whether this will lead to more or less trouble in the short term. We shall certainly need to maintain our vigilance. Meanwhile, we continue to believe that overall, the human rights situation in East Timor has improved over the years. We are, of course, concerned when we receive reports of incidents such as those described above. For this reason, we have been frank with the Indonesians about violations of human rights. We shall continue, with our partners, to urge the Indonesians to exercise moderation. For the present, we believe that a demarche by the Twelve about the demonstrations would be less effective than the private representations which we have been making and which we shall continue to make when appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Caithness

THE EARL OF CAITHNESS